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The consequences of organizational commitment in education

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Abstract

For enhancing quality of education, organizational commitment (OC) provides suitable background and is a vital factor in schools. OC is related to constructs of productivity, organizational performance and service quality. The author examined simultaneously two components of OC namely: 1- Maintaining membership 2- Attachment. Data were obtained from a sample of 903 teachers in schools in Mashhad, Iran. Teachers believe that the two component of OC are well grounded in schools and there is a significant correlation between the two components. Findings suggest the application of the components of OC for developing healthy culture in schools to achieve educational goals.

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Keywords: Organizational commitment, Maintaining membership, Attachment, Teachers, Schools

1. Introduction

For enhancing quality of education, OC provides a suitable background and is a vital factor in schools. OC has been a difficult multidimensional phenomenon to define (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001) and it relates to constructs of productivity, organizational performance and service quality (Oshagbemi, 2000). OC is a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization (Mowday et al., 1982; Hackett & Lapiere, 2001). OC is an attitude of attachment to the organization (Mowday et al., 1982) and teacher's emotional attachment to organization may engender stronger personal commitment and enable the teacher to experience a sense of belonging (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). OC is important to achieve human resources capabilities (Chang, 2006). OC represents the core components for co-operation and consensus, OC helps workers to identify with the organization's rules, rewards and values (Katz & Kahn, 1978). Hence, commitment has always been associated with a broad range of positive effects. Commitment is not only essential for the organization, but also important for individuals (Balliet, 1989; Mowday, Porter & Steers, 1982). OC as a predictor of teachers willingness to recommend the organization (Paulina et al., 2006).

2. Concept and literature review of organizational commitment

OC is a psychological stabilizing or obliging force that binds an individual to courses of action relevant to the target of the organization (Bentein et al., 2005; Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001) and it is a form loyalty to the organization (Lambert, 2004). Commitment has been examined under many names over the years: teamwork, loyalty, esprit de corps and cohesion (Festinger et al., 1950), equilibrium (Roethlisberger & Dickson, 1943; Barnard, 1938), willingness, cooperation, and others. Reviewing the literature on OC (Buchanan, 1974; Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982; Reichers, 1985) reveals that there are at least three different approaches to conceptualizing OC. First, Becker's (1960) Side-Bet Theory was used extensively in research studies on OC. Side-bets refer to "anything of importance that an employee has invested, such as time, effort or money that would be lost or devalued at some cost

to the employee, if he or she left the organization” (Wallace, 1997, p. 728). Second is the psychological perspective which views OC as a three-component orientation. These components are: (a) identification with the goals and values of the organization, (b) a willingness to focus strong effort toward helping the organization achieve its goals, and (c) a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization (Buchanan, 1974; Porter, Steers, Mowday, & Boulian, 1974). Under this perspective, commitment is defined as "the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization" (Steers, 1977, p. 46). Third is the attributions perspective, which defines commitment as a binding of individuals to behavioural acts that results when individuals attribute an attitude of commitment to themselves after engaging in behaviours that are volitional, explicit, and irrevocable (Reichers, 1985). Most recently Meyer and Allen (1991, 1997) proposed a three-component model of OC that includes three distinct dimensions: affective, continuance, and normative. (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Meyer & Allen, 1997 ; Meyer et al., 1993). Affective Commitment is defined as the employee's emotional attachment to the organization. Continuance Commitment refers to the individual commitment to the organization because he/she perceives a high cost of losing organizational membership. Normative Commitment refers to the individual commitment to remain with an organization because of feelings of obligation.

Table 1.Components of organizational commitment

Components	Various inferences and theoretical propositions concerning components of OC by past researchers
Maintaining membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OC is a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization (Mowday et al., 1982; Hackett & Lapierre, 2001). • Meyer et al. (1993) state that OC is a psychological state that has implications for the decision to continue membership in the organization. • Commitment is defined as a function of the rewards and costs associated with organizational membership (Alutto et al., 1973; Becker, 1960; Farrell & Rusbult, 1981). • OC can be characterized by a belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values, a willingness to exert substantial effort on behalf of the organization, and a desire to maintain membership in the organization (Porter et al., 1974).
Attachment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OC is an attitude of attachment to the organization (Mowday et al., 1982) and employee's emotional attachment to organization may engender stronger personal commitment and enable the employee to experience a sense of belonging (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). • OC can be referred to as the willingness of social actors to give their energy and loyalty to a social system or an effective attachment to an organization apart from the purely instrumental worth of the relationship (Buchanan, 1974). • Commitment involves one's psychological attachment or bond to the organization (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986; Porter et al., 1974 ; Meyer et al., 1993). • OC is an important attitude to foster among employees to attach them to the organization (Hackett & Lapierre, 2001). • Mathieu and Zajac (1990) define organizational commitment as an attachment to or identification with the organization.

1. Research on organizational commitment

OC has been identified as a precedent to the constructs of job satisfaction (Yoshimura, 2003; Spence-Laschinger et al ,2004), Organizational citizenship behaviour (Mowday, 1999; LaMastro, 2000), absenteeism and turnover (Buchanan, 1974; Mathieu & Zajac ,1990), Organizational performance (Mowday, 1999), perceived organizational support (LaMastro ,2000; Mowday ,1999; Fuller& Barnett,2003), productivity (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990), service quality (Oshagbemi, 2000),retrospective rationalization (Meyer & Allen, 1991), person-job fit (Meyer & Allen, 1997) , job alternatives (Meyer et al., 1990), and investments and obligations (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

2. Body

4.1 Research questions

Two research questions connected with the aim are developed and tested:

Research questions 1: What is the extent of OC with regard to school teachers in Mashhad?

Research questions 2: What is the extent of the relationships of the components of OC with regard to school teachers in Mashhad?

4.2 Purpose and sample of the research

The main objective of the study is to determine the extent of OC among school teachers. The data for this study was obtained from 903 school teachers in 162 schools in Mashhad, Iran. Random sampling method was used. Reliability of the Questionnaire with Cronbach's coefficient alpha was 0.97.

4.3 Research Methodology

Descriptive statistics and correlation were utilized in this study. Accordingly, Pearson's product moment correlation was used in data analysis. A t-test for one statistic sample was made to examine the deviation of OC with respect to the desired situation.

3. Findings and results

5.1 Finding of research questions 1:

As the results in Table 1 below show, the t-test value was at a significant level for 2 components, the highest being 9.613. Overall, the mean value was more than 60. These findings show that the level of Organizational Commitment for 2 components was prominent or favourable (i.e. more than 60 mean values) in Mashhad.

Table 1: Overall results mean value and t-test value related to OC

Components	Mean	SD	t-test	df	sig
Organizational Commitment (OC)	70.6	18.4	17.264	902	.000
Maintaining membership (OC4)	67.8	24.6	9.613	902	.000
Attachment (OC5)	66.6	25.8	7.762	902	.000

Based on the results in Table 1, overall mean score for 'Maintaining membership' component (from the maximum score 100) was 67.8, and the standard deviation value was 24.6. This means that there was a significant level of maintaining membership component in OC in the schools in Mashhad. Maintaining membership was one of the components of OC which was measured by 5 questions. Based on the results, of the 903 respondents, it was found that more than 66% scored prominent and very prominent for the component of maintaining membership in OC. The teachers expressed "I like to maintain membership and remain in this organization."

Additionally, based on the results in Table 1, overall mean score for the Attachment component (from the maximum score 100) was 66.6, and the standard deviation value was 25.8. 'There was a prominent level of attachment' was one of the nine components of OC which was measured by 6 questions. Based on the results, of the 903 respondents, it was found that more than 65% scored prominent and very prominent for the component of attachment in OC. The teachers expressed "I feel like 'part of the family' at my organization."

5.2 Finding of research questions 2:

There were significant linear correlations between Attachment and OC ($r = .90$) in schools in Mashhad. Additionally there were significant linear correlations between Maintaining membership and OC ($r = .88$) in schools in Mashhad. These correlations were statistically significant at the .05 level (2-tailed). There were significant linear correlations between Attachment and Maintaining membership ($r = .85$) in schools in Mashhad.

4. Conclusion

In schools, teachers must be patient, able to motivate students, understand the students' needs, and accept differences in others. In schools, teachers are empowering their capacity for growth and success. When teachers are empowered in areas important to them, they at the same time build the capacity of students. Hence, teachers require professional skills. Communication, cooperation and commitment are essential skills. OC is a vital component in any effective organization (Brantley, 1993) and is important in achieving human resource capabilities (Chang, 2006). Teacher commitment has been identified as a key aspect of a school's capacity for reform (Geijsel et al., 2003) and renewal through insights and it determines the quality of teaching and the quality of school improvements. This study suggests the application of the components of OC for developing healthy culture in schools to achieve educational goals. Findings can improve organizational performance, quality of education and development of human resources.

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